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ABSTRACT

At the fourth annual Cal-State Hayward Conference in Rhetorical Criticism, 25 upper division and graduate students from 17 western colleges and universities presented papers on rhetorical theory, history, and criticism. Panels of faculty members from the same colleges and universities, acting as editor-critics, rated five of these papers as superior, and they are included in this volume. The titles and authors are: "A Rhetorical Criticism of an Old Negro Leader" by Paul H. Arnston, "Rhetorical Implications of 'Soul on Ice'" by Steve R. Dowd, "The Spirit of Nancy Astor" by Kathleen Huber, "Eugene V. Debs--A Case of Rhetorical Failure" by Verna L. Quirin, and "Stokely Carmichael Jazz Artist" by Larry Richardson. The conference address by Everett Lee Hunt, "The Rhetoric of Violence," is also included in this volume. (TO)

# Conference in Rhetorical Criticism

## Commended Papers

James Johnson, Editor

John Hammerback, Bruce Loebs, Assitant Editors

California State College, Hayward — 1969

Cover Design by Ivan Hess

ERRATA

Mr. Richardson, whose paper appears on pages 21-24, is a graduate student at Washington State University.

. . . . .

Professor Howard Streifford represented San Jose State College.

Professor D. E. Moore represented Sacramento State College.

Professor Don Cameron represented San Fernando Valley State College.

Professor Henry McGuckin represented San Francisco State College.

# - FOREWORD -

On May 10, 1969, the Speech and Drama Department and Creative Arts Division Council of California State College, Hayward, held the Fourth Annual Conference in Rhetorical Criticism. In attendance were professors and twenty-five upper division and graduate students from seventeen colleges and universities of the western states. This year we were also honored with the participation of representatives from Park College in Missouri, invited as special guests. The students read papers on rhetorical theory, history, and criticism in six sections to panels of professors acting as editor-critics. The five papers in this volume are rated superior by the editor-critics.

Our featured speaker at this year's conference was Everett Lee Hunt, Professor Emeritus and Dean Emeritus at Swarthmore College. Dr. Hunt adapted his background and wisdom to a discussion of "The Rhetoric of Violence." This timely and significant subject was met with great interest and enthusiasm by his audience. Included in this volume is the text of Dr. Hunt's banquet address.

We have attempted to transcribe, as accurately as possible, the complete text of Dr. Hunt's address. The introductory remarks of Dr. Hunt were extemporized, and minor adjustments were made in readying the spoken word for the written page. We are indebted to Dr. Hunt for his cooperation in preparing the final text.

The influence and stature of Everett Lee Hunt in the field of rhetoric cannot be described adequately on these pages. Our respect and admiration of Dr. Hunt is such that we wish to dedicate this volume to him. Many words of praise were accorded to Dr. Hunt on May 11, 1969, but perhaps the most eloquent phrase of that evening was, "He is truly one of the beautiful people among us."

# Student and Faculty Participants

## STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

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Richardson, Larry
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Shama, Lyle Eric
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Dolph, Phil, San Jose State College
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Fulkerson, William, Fresno State College
Geeting, Baxter, Sacramento State College
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Larson, Harold C., Northern Arizona University
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Mills, Glen E., University of California, S. B.
Natharius, David, Fresno State College
Peterson, Gary L., Brigham Young University
Strother, David, Washington State University
Wunder, Phillip, San Jose State College
Wurtham, Leonard, San Fernando Valley State College

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

9:30 Briefing – Music Building B2105

10:00 Critics' Silent Review of Papers in Sections
(See Section Schedule)

10:00 "1969 Begins" in B2105

12:00 Box Lunch in Music Patio

1:00 Presentation of Papers in Sections
Presentation
Comments of Editor-Critics
Decision for Commendation and Publication

4:00 Reading to Entire Conference of Commended Papers
Music Building, B2105

5:30 - 7:00 No-host social hour, Norse Room, Doric Motel

7:30 Dinner: Cal State Cafeteria

Introducing the Speaker: Dr. Robert D. Clark, President, San Jose State College

Speaker: Dr. Everett Lee Hunt,
Professor Emeritus and Dean Emeritus,
Swarthmore College

"The Rhetoric of Violence"

# — Contents —

# THE RHETORIC OF VIOLENCE

## by

## Dr. Everett Lee Hunt



Mr. Chairman, President Clark,

May I express a very deep sympathy with you sir – you have recounted here that, quite unwillingly, you had to depart from teaching English literature and get into the field of speech and rhetoric. And I quite unwillingly had to depart from the field of speech and rhetoric and was exiled to the teaching of English literature [laughter]. So we are fellow exiles and have tried to find, as best we could, some comfort in that field which we still hold an interest in. I think, both of us perhaps have sunk still lower – I'm not as high as he is – for we have become administrators and therefore no longer able to keep up that scholastic fervor which we had as young men.

And may I mention the presence here of Harry Caplan, who was a speaker here on this occasion last year. It's been nearly fifty years ago now since we started a classical rhetoric seminar at Cornell. And certainly I don't think either one of us ever suspected that some fifty years later, out here in the West, we should be at the same meeting celebrating rhetoric and remembering those days when we never had any idea what future that subject had for us. And I know that there are some who say, well it has more of a past than a future because anything ancient is irrelevant. But it remains very strange that Professor Caplan has requests to come all over the country, to teach the classical tradition in rhetoric. There does seem to be a continuing belief in it. And so it is a great comfort to me to have him here tonight and to be with him here on this occasion.

The present extent of violence in our country is so dramatic that any discussion other than "what do we do now" is likely to seem, I think, a little dull and irrelevant. But I want to begin by asking some of the questions that have arisen in my mind as I survey the scene. And I wish I could say to you that I am going to answer all these questions, but many questions that arise in my mind are not readily answerable by me, and so I pass them on to you in the full confidence that you will answer them easily and quickly, and if there were time for discussion you could correct me, I'm sure.

Let me just read a list of these questions without stopping even to attempt an answer here, but I do discuss them, partially at least, a little later in my paper. And the first one is: When is violence persuasive in producing significant social change? And I think if you reflect on the events of the last six months you'll have different answers to that at different times. Second, if violence is persuasive, does that put it within the field of rhetoric? When you think of rhetoric as finding all the available means of persuasion, is violence an available means of persuasion? And if we regard it as a part of rhetoric is it strictly a new rhetofic or does it go back to the old traditions? Is it a new rhetoric because its exponents seem to come mostly from the new youth? If it is a new rhetoric does it have any relation whatever to the old? Does it have any underlying philosophies which are to any extent different from the philosophies underlying rhetoric of the ancient ages past? Does it present to us any social programs that may be judged rationally? Does the conservatism of our present establishment justify the abandonment of all appeals to reason? Can a study of the rhetoric of violence stimulate the non-violent discussion of the same issues which are raised sometimes in the defense of violence?

Well, I think I should say that these questions sound a little academic and they may seem to indicate what is true, that I am trying to outline something of a program for study rather than a platform for immediate action. If I were competent to do it I would like to propose a platform for action and go out of here with a sense of your support. Since i'm not competent I would like to propose a program of study that I think might eventually aid us all in a program of action.

Well, so much for these questions, and now I won't discuss them exactly in that order, but they will be, I think, inherent in what I have to say.

And first, with reference to my predilection for such an ancient subject as the very ancient rhetoric of Aristotle. When Abram Sachar was President of Brandeis University he told an audience – "The early Jews created the Bible out of their lives, and the later Jews created their lives out of the Bible." This is symbolic of the establishment of a tradition and its subsequent dominance. And by analogy we might say – the early Greeks created a rhetoric out of persuasion in Greek life. And later rhetoricians study persuasion as it was observed in those days in classical rhetoric. Professor Welldon in the introduction to his translation of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* way back in 1886 says: "The *Rhetoric* of

Aristotle will be read as the solitary instance of a book which not only begins a science, but which completes it. Rhetoric was Aristotle's creation, and whatever has beer put into it, from his time to ours, is due to him."

While it may be expected that there should be reactions against the domination of any one book – the Bible, or the *Rhetoric*, – it's been disappointing that there has been so much less change in the study of rhetoric than in the related fields of ethics, politics, psychology and sociology. It has been said that the greatest contributors to rhetoric have been philosophers, for whom rhetoric was only an incidental interest. Others are saying that both psychology and sociology now have more to say about persuasion than has rhetoric, and that they are also more scientific. They are beginning to apply scientific tests to rhetoric, and when, as so often, they find an ancient observation valid, they have at least achieved the victory of a scientific verification. To me one of the most likely sources for the enlargement of rhetoric is the study of rhetorical criticism, as it has been exemplified in this conference here at Hayward. And I would say as it has been exemplified here today. I have read the papers in the past three conferences, I've been very much impressed by them. And I was very much impressed by the papers I heard this afternoon. I had the feeling that they were not papers written under the, shall we say, dictatorship of an established system of rhetoric, but they seemed to me studies of specific aspects of rhetorical behavior written according to the interests of the writers; therefore a new freedom was there. I had the feeling, to revert to Mr. Sachar's quotation in the first place, that these people were creating rhetoric out of our own lives as well as out of the lives of the past.

Of course, we shall remain indebted to some of the observations of the old rhetoric, just as the Bible will continue to be quoted for its wisdom, ever by the most sceptical.

To take an example of this union of ancient wisdom and modern experience, let me say a word or two about the contemporary analyses of youth as a possible explanation for the generation gap. Take for instance such contemporary studies as Kenneth Keniston's studies of both committed and alienated youth. From these studies, which I think are fascinating, one might almost conclude that modern youth is altogether a new product of a new civilization, partly formed, I suppose, by Freudian psychology. But now turn to Aristotle on youth, – and, poor man, he didn't know Freud – just to quote a few sentences from him:

> Youth is passionate, quick to anger, and quick to obey its impulses. They are ambitious and contentious, rather than avaricious. They are credulous, because they have not often been deceived; they are high-minded, for they have not yet been abased by life; they do everything too much: they love too much; they hate too much, and so in all else. They think they know everything and are positive; and that is the cause of their overdoing all things. They measure their neighbors by their own innocence, and so conceive that these are suffering wrongfully. They are lovers of laughter, of wit and of educated insolence.

Now think of that in that simple, primitive Athens! And Aristotle has no psychologist to advise him. This just came through his daily observations.

Well now, lest you should think I, as an old man, take a king of malevolent pleasure in this condemnation of youth [laughter], let me turn to what he said about old age [laughter]:

> Elderly people, as most things are disappointing, are positive about nothing, and do all things much too feebly. They neither like nor hate strongly, but like as if they would afterwards hate, and hate as if they would afterwards like. They are illiberal, for property is one of their necessaries. They are chilled while youth is hot; and so old age has prepared the way for cowardice, since fear is a chill.

Well don't you think he was impartial? [laughter]

I am not quoting from the next stage in the *Rhetoric* which has to do with middle age, which is praised, and which I am told by scholarly footnote writers was written by Aristotle when he was forty-nine [laughter].

Whether our study of the generation gap fills us with hope or despair, it is an essential part of any study of the rhetoric of violence, and even more so now when youths live together in such large and independent communities, and when they seem to be conformist in their non-conformities. And this observation leads me to wonder if the gap, the generation gap, is perpetual. I don't have enough adequate scholarship to answer this positively, but I have turned with a great deal of interest to a book just published by Lewis Feuer called, *The Conflict of the Generations*. I haven't read the book (it's $12.50), but I've read two or three reviews of it and did manage to borrow it from our director of admissions at Swarthmore, who has read it with great care as he prepares for the admissions for the next year [laughter]. And this is a quotation:

> As David wept for Absalom, many later generations wept for their sons. Both Plato and Aristotle recognized the generational struggle as a prime factor in generational change. Generational struggle differs from class struggle. Labor movements have never had to struggle for issues the way student movements have. Student movements are born of vague, undefined emotions which seek for some issue, some cause to which to attach themselves. A complex of urges, altruism, idealism, revolt, self-sacrifice and even self-destruction searches the social order for a strategic avenue of expression . . . A student movement will usually tend to choose a side which involves a higher measure of violence or humiliation directed against the older generation . . . But [he says in a final kindly conclusion] when all our analysis of generational conflict is done, what endures is the promise and hope of a purified idealism, a dream of renewal which remains the historical bearer of humanity's highest hopes.

But this kindly conclusion somehow or other didn't circulate in Berkeley as much as the earlier part, and so he found it necessary to move to Toronto and from there he published this book.

Well, now I turn from these generalizations about youth and age to the subject matter, the subject matter of the participants in rhetoric, the subject matter of those people who use rhetoric.

In many periods of the history of education rhetoric has been limited to the technique of discourse. And

when a proposal was published in the *Quarterly Journal* in 1918 to add substance to form in the study of rhetoric, the vigorous reply was that this was to destroy our standing as specialists. As teachers we could teach only what we could teach authoritatively, and that was the technique of discourse. Later in the 1930's when Harvard emphasized the concept of general education, it was admitted that rhetoric might have a special place in this even if it seemed like going back to irrelevant Cicero and Quintilian.

Well, my proposal now, as far as I have a definite and specific proposal, is that we do need a course, a complete course in the rhetoric of violence; we do need an entire textbook devoted to material on the rhetoric of violence, and it should be kept up to date. Recent events, I think, make it obvious that revolts on and off the campus which either threaten or use violence as a method of coercive persuasion need to be discussed rationally by large numbers of students, who are pretty certain to have diverse opinions. And the absence of this concern of discussion on the part of a great many moderates, I think, has added power to those who are exponents of violence.

I think it is of vital concern in such a course that students should read those books with widely diverse points of view coming out of Berkeley and Columbia. When I first thought of talking about this I thought surely I would discuss those specific issues, but by the time I had read the books I thought they were so complicated and this time was so short that all I could do was to recommend that you too should read them. And the students should follow events at Michigan, Wisconsin, Chicago, Brandeis, San Francisco State, Notre Dame, Colorado, Queens and more conspicuously now Harvard and Cornell and Dartmouth. Follow the daily paper, you'll add new ones everyday. And then, when you begin to philosophize about those items, as I hope you would do, you might turn and say, "Well, what are the ideas back of these – are there any new ideas or philosophies that seem to warrant these revolts, ideas which these young revolters quote and use and which influence and form their rhetoric? I want to mention just two men who seem to me to provide these beliefs – although they are in the air almost everywhere.

Herbert Marcuse, now teaching at San Diego, has been called the Marx of the new left. He has recently summarized his revolutionary creed in a short "Essay on Liberation," and his students often leave his classes to picket the more conservative professors, which at least suggests that he has influence. He believes that liberation must precede the construction of his ideal free society, and therefore he will outline no Utopia. The free society is to grow out of established societies. His Great Refusal will not accept the outworn strategies of patience and persuasion. And the moral hypocrisy of society may be effectively attacked through the free use of obscenity, which focuses attention on our absurd conventionalities. I have heard enough current obscenity to suppose it was just, shall we say, the exuberence of youth, and to find it seriously treated by philosophers as a serious means of underminding our present society was something of a surprise to me. But I find now that psychologists are undertaking serious studies of the psychological effect of this, and I think we'll have to wait a little for the future to find out just what it is.

Well, Marcuse goes on to say, the intellectuals are to be the leaders of the new revolution, rather than the laboring classes, and the intellectuals are also to lead the revolution in art, the creation of a new free sensuality, as well as develop these new terms of abuse which will enable us all to make a gay fun of this old fashioned society. The student radicals may aid in formulating revolutionary theory, but they cannot be a great force until they get the support of the masses. As labor is now capitalistic, the most helpful group will be in the black ghettos, which will have to struggle also against the middle class capitalistic blacks. The student radicals may demand educational reforms as a means of achieving a larger support, but these are minor issues compared with the destruction of society. If violence is necessary to accomplish this, it should be remembered that the Establishment uses violence in burning, poisoning, and bombing, so there is no such thing as a legitimate distinction between legitimate and illegitimate violence.

And while Marcuse does not believe in freedom of speech and would suppress any opposition to his new society and would use violence when necessary, he does not directly exalt violence for its own sake. And so I will conclude with this brief summary of him and turn to a philosopher of black power, Frantz Fanon, the Algerian psychoanalyst, whose dates are 1925-1961, who aided his fellow Algerians and other Africans in the rebellion against the French. He expanded this rebellion into a vision of a new third world, which is to be shared by all oppressed people, and eventually by all men. And may I say about this book, *The Miserable of the Earth*, to me it is a profoundly moving book, and his descriptions of the conditions of the Blacks and of the oppressed people everywhere can give an academic professor something of a sense of guilt of not having spent more time on oppression. And so I, if I don't seem to sympathize with his philosophy of violence, would commend him to you as one who will turn your attention with greatly increased sympathy to the miserable of the earth. But first, about his comment on violence, let me quote Jean-Paul Sartre, who has written an introduction to the new translation of this book which is available easily in paperback. Sartre says:

> This irrepressible violence is man creating himself. The native cures himself of colonial neurosis by thrusting out the settler through the force of arms. The child of violence, at every moment he draws from violence its humanity. We are men at his expense [that is the primitive man's expense]; he makes himself a man at ours; a different man of higher quality because he has indulged in violence.

This then from the Parisian playwright and not from the primitive black – although I should not refer to Fanon as primitive either. Fanon himself says:

> Violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction. It makes him fearless and restores his self-respect . . . Violence alone, violence committed by the people, violence organized and educated by its leaders makes it possible for the masses to understand social truths.

And that's all I shall quote from him.

Let me say that it's not only depressed black people on Fanon's primitive Africa who find themselves by participating in violence. Psychiatrists and deans in American colleges tell us of the alienated and lonely students who have found a new life by sharing in mass demonstrations violent and non-violent. And recently the dean of Barnard College has issued a kind of appeal based on her interview with the girls who found themselves by joining the mass demonstrations at Columbia, who are no longer alone and solitary and alienated, but are self-confident, defiant and joyous. She asked what other course of action should she recommend to them that would equal their delight in this violence.

Well now, let me turn a little bit to some of the teachers of rhetoric and what they have had to say. And I'm going to skip here; I don't wish to prolong this speech. But I think it's rather important, and I have been rather surprised to find out how many editors of texts of new speeches on violence are quite profoundly sympathetic with this violence and how many of them are inclined to denounce our old rhetoric as one of the instruments of the establishment and something we've got to get rid of just as we get rid of the old society. I refer to several of these articles from the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* in the last three or four years, and I think I can assume that most of you either have read them or will find them easily available.

Mr. Franklin Haiman, in 1967, said, "We must not be harsh in our judgments of non-rational strategies of persuasion." That seems to me to be quite a significant phrase – "Non-rational strategies of persuasion," or as some other people call it, "coersive persuasion," and as other people call it "coersive rhetoric." And he says, "Whenever the dissatisfied do not have a relative equality of power they are justified in appealing to a non-rational strategy of persuasion." This from a well-established professor of rhetoric! And he says, "Whenever the Establishment seems unwilling to listen to reason, then the dissidents can resort to [what he calls] 'Body Rhetoric.' " I expect some of you are quite familiar with that term; people like it because Justice Harlan, in 1961, said that "body rhetoric" was a part of free speech and therefore had something of the same rights as long as it didn't particularly injure others. So this rhetorician, this professor of rhetoric, quotes with approval Bayard Rustin's remark, "We need to go into the streets all over the country and make a mountain of social confusion until the power structure is altered."

Another man that I want to quote briefly is Park Burgess of Dartmouth, and this essay of his was written before the recent events at Dartmouth, and may merely have strengthened his convictions. He says, "Our moral racist denial offers adequate moral-justification for the rhetoric of Black Power. Beneath the Black Power call to arms is a cry for justice and community. If we are to repudiate or transcend the rhetoric of violence we must abandon this conventional rhetoric of 'business as usual' for a new moral rhetoric of 'democratic commitment.' "

And this in an article by Robert Scott and Donald Smith. It's quite a long article, and I just want to read a conclusion here because it is, I think, an effective rhetorical condemnation of the old rhetoric:

> Since the time of Aristotle academic rhetorics have been for the most part instruments of established society, presupposing the 'goods' of order, civility, reason, decorum and civil or theocratic law. But the theorists of the rhetoric of confrontation now challenge the old rhetoric, and their aspirations for a better world are so great and their passions for action so strong that they compel us to acknowledge that the civility and decorum of our old rhetoric serve merely as marks for the preservation of injustice, they condemn the dispossessed to non-being and that as transmitted in a technological society they become the instrumentalities of power for those who "have". And we must have a new, broader basis for our rhetoric.

And one other article on the Columbia demonstrations, which does not approve of them, but says they are a case study in coercive rhetoric. And James Andrews says, whether or not that rhetoric is justified, coercive rhetoric is a part of rhetoric and must be treated by us as a part of our study of the subject of rhetoric.

And a final text book on the rhetoric of Black Power, which has speeches by Stokley Carmichael, and [Charles] Hamilton, and Martin Luther King and others, closes with the remarks that these are our final warnings in society, and if we don't heed them, we get the destruction that is coming to us. And I would just raise the question in your minds as a part of this study, whether the editors are justified in saying these exponents of Black Power are the authoritative spokesmen of all of the black race, and whether or not they have sufficiently considered that there are a great many other points of view in the black race and that there is some doubt as to whether these exponents of black power are not already somewhat losing their ground. But at any rate I think this requires very careful consideration.

A more neutral book called *The Agitator in American Society*, criticizes the other books for bringing in only contemporary rhetoric. He says we should have old speeches because we can study old speeches with detachment. And then, he says its surprising how many similarities you'll find when you come to study old speeches.

Well, so much for the teachers of rhetoric and I think maybe I have just retained my traditional prejudices. All this has been rather amazing to me and I think it's worth our very careful study.

Now, let's turn very briefly to the action taken by some administrators toward student violence and see what we can learn from these actions.

The rhetoric of the public press has been very strongly against violence, even when exploiting it, and has been very critical of the faculty and administration. And there are certain highly rhetorical speeches denouncing

the whole academic world as wholly lacking in any backbone. Some of them have said, even in Congress, some with an academic background, that the American Association of University Professors spent years with what they called a brave fight to have power in American universities, but now, when cowardly administrations are trying to turn their sense of responsibility to the faculties are just as cowardly as the administrations; there are no sources of power in the administrations at all and the government must provide it. And that will be effective rhetoric for some audiences.

Presidents Abram of Brandeis and Levi of Chicago found that by patience and restraint the moderates came to their support and the take-overs died out. Pusey of Harvard and his Dean Ford appealed for police protection after a particularly outrageous seizure, and yet, the faculty and students repudiated them. Perkins of Cornell refused to use force in suppressing the first armed revolt, persuaded the faculty to grant amnesty, and now is rapidly, it seems, losing faculty and student support for selling out. These things all seem contradictory. And my conclusion is that there is, as yet, no clear formula for dealing with student violence. There are various commissions appointed, and the hope is that out of these contradictory experiences they may reach some agreement which may be publicized and acted upon by the universities and relieve somewhat our present uncertainty and confusion. But I should say that for the present a student studying the rhetoric of violence needs to study particular institutions with care. And he should refrain from final judgements until history has given him complete evidence, even if he feels that Father Hesburgh of Notre Dame has said the final word.

Many sympathizers with student rebels have said the cause of student violence lies in the univdrsities themselves for being so slow to reform themselves. I'll skip over a good many university presidents who have said this, somewhat to the horror of their faculties. But even these men do not agree upon the reforms that they think should have been made. A listing of universities and colleges where violence has occurred makes it evident that the same events occur in very diverse institutions. For example, Professor Cox of Harvard, who headed the *Report of the Fact Finding Commission* at Columbia, said he was glad to know that nothing like this could happen at Harvard where things were so different. Well you know what did happen; and small, intimate, highly personal colleges seem to face the same demands that are presented to the multiversity. This tends to drive an observer back again from a concentration on issues to an analysis of the violent students. And to return somewhat to our early consideration of youth – Kenneth Kenniston, (quoting from the latter part of his most recent volume), says students are seeking two very different revolutions. One is the old, familiar revolution of the industrial society that started in America and France in the 18th century (and was not really so different from the days of Pericles). It's a quantitative revolution that seeks for the extension to more and more people the rights and opportunities formerly available only to the aristocracy. But we also have a revolution which will never rest content with quantitative affluence and political freedom. It is a qualitative revolution on the part of the people who still find that something is missing in their lives, and they want to escape the limits of the material. They want an expansion of consciousness, a recognition of the unique value of the individual, roles in life that will never remain static, meaningful human relations in what they call participatory democracy.

Well now, are these two different revolutions intertwined or are they quite separate? Should they be intertwined? Is it right to demand imaginative careers of self-realization and freedom from all monotony while you realize that so many men live in misery? Does the demands of the first revolution leave the second unfulfilled? And will the pursuit of the second frustrate the first? And will all this produce a continuous rage of frustration that will seek its satisfaction in violence? And will the rhetoric of violence be a major means of self-realization as both Fanon and Marcuse have said?

Well, I have to arrive at some conclusion, and so I appeal to a figure that I greatly admire, John W. Gardner. In his latest book, *Self-Renewal*, he has what he calls a prescription for a sick society. In this he opposes violence, not because he is a conservative who wants to protect the *status quo;* his diagnosis of the sickness of society is just as severe as the diagnosis of many alienated rebels. But I quote, "The tasks of social change are tasks for the tough minded and competent. Those who come to the task with the currently fashionable mixture of passion and incompetence only add to the confusion." As so, preparing for the argument that without disruption on the campus or riots in the slums, no change would have come about, although he admits that we do seem to have produced changes, he warns that those who cite the gains of violence ignore the losses, the backlashes, the repressions and the lasting hatreds and withdrawals that are following them.

Some of us will hope that the outbreak of violence in recent years will be merely a passing phase in contemporary life. I'm afraid that it's likely to get worse before it gets better. And a study of its irrational demands, its misleading appeals, and I must admit, at times its very real victories for reform, will add to the power of a rational rhetoric as an instrument for social change through persuasive appeals for justice. And I hope we may make those appeals.

# A RHETORICAL CRITICISM OF AN OLD NEGRO LEADER

by

Paul H. Arntson, Senior in Speech, San Diego State College

On December 10, 1950, Ralph Johnson Bunche accepted the Nobel Peace Prize for helping to settle the Palestine War. He was the first Black man and the eleventh American to receive the award. The *New York Times* considered him to be "the world's outstanding Negro."[1] General Eisenhower thought Dr. Bunche was one of the greatest statesmen this country had ever produced.[2]

Yet today, for many Black Americans, his place in history is not so exalted. Malcolm X considered Dr. Bunche to be merely "window dressing."[3]

Stokely Carmichael seemed to suggest that Bunche was one of those Black men who "makes it, leaving his black brothers behind in the ghetto as fast as his new sports car will take him."[4]

This new attitude toward Dr. Bunche reflects a growing suspicion about several of the old Negro leaders. According to Eldridge Cleaver, "the only Negro Americans allowed to attain national or international fame have been the puppets and lackeys of the white power structure." In short, Cleaver saw them as "Uncle Toms." On the other hand, Cleaver suggested that any Negro, like Garvey, Robeson, DuPois, or Williams, who sought leadership but "refused to become a tool of the white power structure was either cast into prison, hounded out of the country or blasted into obscurity."[5] Nathan Hare was also suspicious of the old Negro leaders. They were men whose "selection and promotion by the white liberal establishment" meant that the establishment could manipulate them, either directly or indirectly.[6] William Brink and Louis Harris summarize, somewhat biasedly, this new attitude toward the old Negro leaders. They state that "In the angry extremist view, men like King, Wilkens, and Young are Uncle Toms, gullibly playing into the hands of whites who soothe them with sweet talk, and occasionally hire a Negro who looks as if he won't offend anyone."[7]

This new attitude toward the old Negro leaders like Dr. Bunche raises an important question. To what extent are the suspicions about the old Negro leaders justified? It is a question that the field of rhetorical criticism is well suited to answer. It would seem that only after evaluating how the demands placed upon a Negro leader by a *particular* situation have been met, could people attempt to claim that the leader was either "outstanding" or "window dressing" for that *particular* situation.

It is the purpose of this paper to evaluate how well Ralph Bunch met the demands placed upon him when he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize. In order to make such an evaluation it is necessary (1) to describe the situation, (2) to analyze what demands that situation placed on Bunche, and (3) to evaluate how well he attempted to meet those demands.

## A DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION

In order to describe the speech situation some mention of the nature of the occasion, the type of audience, and the world-wide circumstances that surrounded the speech are necessary to determine what demands the overall situation placed upon Dr. Bunche.[8] The occasion was the acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize for 1950. The *UN Bulletin* pointed out that the meeting at Oslo was to be "a special celebration marking the fiftieth anniversary of the trust fund founded by Alfred Nobel. To mark the anniversary, all surviving winners of the peace prize are being invited to attend the ceremonial presentation."[9] The immediate audience in Oslo, was described in an AP article dateline December 10, 1950, in the *New York Times*. "King Haakin, Crown Prince Olaf, and other members of the royal family witnessed the presentation by the Parliamentary Committee in Oslo University's largest hall, filled to capacity by prominent Norwegians, Americans, and others, including a party of American

[1]"Americas Most Honored Negro," *Ebony*, V, No. 3 (January, 1950), 60.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]Robert Penn Warren, *Who Speaks for the Negro* (New York, 1965), p. 260.

[4]Stokely Carmichael, "Power and Racism," *The Black Power Revolt*, ed. Floyd B. Barbour (Boston, 1968), p. 65.

[5]Elridge Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*, (New York, 1968), p. 87.

[6]Nathan Hare, "How White Power Whitewashes Black Power," *The Black Power Revolt*, ed. Floyd B. Barbour (Boston, 1968), p. 185.

[7]William Brink and Louis Harris, *Black and White*, (New York, 1966), p. 57.

[8]Since the speech was given in an international situation the world-wide circumstances should be discussed.

[9]*UN Bulletin* IX (October 15, 1950), 382.

Negroes."[10] Dr. Bunche came into the Hall "amid thunderous applause from the audience. He appeared deeply moved. Several minutes elapsed before the ovation ended so that he could speak."[11] One reason the audience gave Dr. Bunche a long ovation was because they deeply appreciated this man of peace during the Korean War.[12] The War was one of three world-wide circumstances surrounding Bunche's speech that should be discussed. The December 11, 1950 issue of the *New York Times* contained practically nothing but news about the Korean War. On December 10, the day Bunche accepted the Peace Prize, over one thousand American Marines lost their lives trying to escape a Red trap in Korea. Four thousand other Marines were wounded. Ninety thousand Red Chinese were massing to cut off another escape route, as the UN armies were in a general retreat all over Korea. There was also mention of two all-Negro units that had fought well.[13]

The fact that there were two all Negro units fighting in Korea leads into a discussion of the second world-wide circumstance that surrounded Dr. Bunche's speech. Negroes were almost totally segregated from whites in America.

The summary of the *1949 Report of the NAACP* hinted at how poorly the Negro was treated in America. The summary listed case after case of Negroes being lynched, beaten, and shot to death. Jim Crow ruled the land. The law institutionalized him in education, voting, housing, health care, transportation, and the military service.[14] Ralph Bunche refused a position as an Assistant to the Secretary of State because of the segregated conditions in Washington.[15] Congress filibustered down antilynch and antipoll tax laws. Negro violence occurred in Chicago, St. Louis, Washington, Birmingham, Packskill, New York, and Groveland, Florida.[16] Clearly the segregated circumstances surrounding Dr. Bunche's speech were deplorable.

These deplorable conditions in America led another Negro leader, Paul Robeson, in Paris on April 20, 1949, to make this comment: "The Black folk of America will never fight against the Soviet Union."[17] This phrase, along with Robeson's continual praise of Russia and condemnation of America, should also have had some influence upon Bunche's speech. *Colliers* on June 10, 1950 suggested that Bunche be appointed Ambassador to Russia to counter Paul Robeson's propaganda about segregation in America.[18] A white magazine was not the only source that saw Bunche as a piece of propaganda. Walter White of the NAACP said that the award should serve also as an answer to Soviet propaganda that merit in a dark skin receives no recognition in the Western World.[19] What Paul Robeson said twenty months before in Paris could not help but influence what Ralph Bunche would say in Oslo. Using the information gathered about the occasion, the audience and the social and political circumstances that surrounded Dr. Bunche's speech, it is now possible to discuss the demands placed on Dr. Bunche.

## AN ANALYSIS OF THE DEMANDS

The demands placed on Dr. Bunche created three problems that he must resolve in his acceptance speech. The first problem is created by the fact that Dr. Bunche was accepting the Nobel Peace Prize during the Korean War. Since the occasion was the fiftieth anniversary of the Prize and several past recipients were there, Dr. Bunche was expected to speak about the significance of the Peace Prize. As the recipient in 1950, he was expected to talk about peace in 1950. Yet Dr. Bunche could hardly ignore the Korean War in stressing the need for peace. This is Dr. Bunche's first problem. How could he speak about the significance of a Peace Prize he won as a UN Diplomat during a brutal and tragic war that the UN was losing?

Dr. Bunche's second major problem centered around the fact that he was the first Negro to receive a Nobel Prize. There was a group of American Negroes in the audience whose racial pride probably expected him to make some reference to his race. Those people who felt his award offset Paul Robeson's propaganda also expected him to emphasize his race. Yet to emphasize his race too much would be to detract from the reason he won the award, and belie the claim that the world can choose men on their merit, not on their race.[20] These demands created the second problem Dr. Bunche must solve in his speech.

[10] *New York Times*, Dec. 11, 1950, p. 10.

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] *New York Times*, Sept. 23, 1950, p. 16.

[13] *New York Times*, Dec. 11, 1950, p. 1.

[14] "Race Relations Summary, 1949 Report of NAACP" *Interracial Review* XXIII, No. 1 (January, 1950), 9 – 12.

[15] "Editorial," *The Crisis*, 57, No. 9 (October, 1950), 578.

[16] "Race Relations Summary," p. 9.

[17] W.E.B. DuBois, "Paul Robeson; Right or Wrong," *Negro Digest*, VIII, No. 5 (March 1950), 8.

[18] "Mr. President May We Suggest," *Colliers*, 125 (June 10, 1950), 86.

[19] *New York Times*, Sept. 23, 1950, p. 4.

[20] "America's Most Honored Negro," *Ebony*, V, No. 3 (January, 1950), 60. "For the moment at least, America forgot his color and remembered only his deeds." (Editorial) *New York Times*, Sept. 23, 1950, p. 16. The important point is not that Bunche is a Negro but that he deserves the award.

Two other demands that come from the speech situation suggest a third problem for Dr. Bunche. The segregated conditions of America and the world should certainly have caused him to condemn them or at least comment specifically on them.[21] Yet by doing so he would have been supporting Paul Robeson's claims and making his speech usable propaganda material for the Russians. Dr. Bunche must decide on how to condemn segregation in America and the rest of the world without sounding too much like Paul Robeson.

How Dr. Bunche responded to the three problems the demands had created will determine what type of Negro Leader he was on December 10, 1950.

## AN EVALUATION OF THE SPEECH

In one way or another, Dr. Bunche attempted to resolve in his speech the three problems he faced. In the second paragraph of his address he stated that the Prize, besides its personal significance had a great significance for

> A restive world in which inequalities among peoples, racial and religious bigotries, prejudices and taboos are endemic and stubbornly persistent. From this northern land has come a vibrant note of hope and inspiration for vast millions of people whose bitter experience has impressed upon them that color and inequality are inexorably concomitant.[22]

In this part of the speech Dr. Bunche tried to solve two of his problems. First, he tried in rather an oblique way to mention that segregation existed in the world. He did manage to avoid letting his comments become useful Russian propaganda but at the expense of wasting a unique opportunity to really emphasize the Negro's plight in the world, and especially in America. It was not every day that a Negro was speaking in front of an international audience that was honoring him. Although Dr. Bunche did state that millions were being denied equal rights, he neither asked nor demanded that changes take place. Instead he suggested that his receiving the Peace Prize would give Negroes and other oppressed groups hope and inspiration. This was as far as Dr. Bunche would go in emphasizing the racial overtones of his award. It was a clever attempt to solve his problem of how to emphasize the racial aspect of his award without detracting from the reason he received the award. Although his response was clever, it is impossible to see how Dr. Bunche could think his award could have some significance for the Negro masses.[23] Stokely Carmichael had a more realistic appraisal of the significance that the events in Bunche's life had for the Negro masses. He quoted a lady from Alabama as saying, "The food that Ralph Bunche eats doesn't fill my stomach."[24]

The amazing thing about Dr. Bunche's comment is that it sounds so white. Maurice R. Davie commented in 1949 that whites have always adopted an attitude of condescension toward Negroes and exaggerated their achievements.[25] The relationship between Dr. Bunche's comment and Homer Metz's comment, who was then the UN Correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor*, is very close.

> For Dr. Bunche is today a symbol of hope, pride, and leadership for all Negroes everywhere. The fact that a member of their race could go so far as he has done, has become an important fact in the minds of millions of them, throughout the world.[26]

The *New York Times* and the *Interracial Review* also ran articles concerning Bunche that were just as exaggerated about Bunche's importance to his race.[27]

A more plausible interpretation of Dr. Bunche's award was suggested in the semi-militant Negro magazine *Crisis*. It suggested that the award went to a deserving person and then asked the question:

> What prevents other talented American Negroes from rising to positions of statesmanship? The artificial barriers of race. The lack of opportunity to acquire skill and equal lack of opportunity to apply these skills after they have been acquired. It was the United Nations not the United States that saw worth in this man and gave him great opportunity. The United States wastes Negro diplomatic talent, putting her account with it on the wrong side of the ledger.[28]

Dr. Bunche and the white press saw in his award some hope and inspiration for the black man while *Crisis* saw in his award the racial barriers that would stop other Negroes from doing the same thing.

It is interesting to note that Dr. Bunche completely avoided using the term "Negro" in his address. It almost seems that he did not want to emphasize the fact that he was a Negro American or a Negro UN Diplomat. This attitude toward his race can be seen in his Commencement Address at Fisk University on May 30, 1949. Speaking to the graduates he said:

[21]Unfortunately neigher the white press nor the Negro press made it a habit to interview men like DuBois and Robeson. Therefore the critic has no support for this point from 1950 sources.

[22]The copy of the speech being used was sent to San Diego State by Dr. Bunche upon request. See Appendix A for a copy. Portions of the speech that were recorded by the *New York Times* and the *London Times* of Dec. 11, 1950 match the speech Dr. Bunche sent.

[23]Dr. Bunche also thought that his career "perhaps indicates that there is opportunity for the Negro here." *Negro Digest*, VIII, No. 11 (September, 1950), 3 – 12.

[24]Stokely Carmichael, "Who is Qualified," *New Republic*, 154 (January 8, 1966) 21.

[25]Maurice R. Davie, *Negroes in American Society* (New York, 1949), p. 381.

[26]Homer Metz, "He Made Peace in Palestine," *New Republic*, 120 (May 30, 1949), 10.

[27]"Ralph Bunche, Statesman," *Interracial Review*, XXII, No. 3 (March, 1949), 36. (Editorial) *New York Times*, Sept. 23, 1950, p. 16.

[28]"Editorial," *The Crisis*, 57, No. 9 (October, 1950), 578.

> They are Negroes primarily in a negative sense – they reject that sort of treatment that deprives them of their birthright as Americans. Remove that treatment and their identification as Negroes in the American society would become meaningless . . .

Later in the address he suggests that the basic longing of each graduate "is to be an American in full. Not a Negro American. Not an Afro-American. Just an American."[29] The negative attitude toward his race is one of the primary reasons he failed to meet some of the problems facing him in his speech.

In the next to the last paragraph, Dr. Bunch suggested that this award ceremony had a "special symbolic significance . . . in a dark and perilous hour of human history" because the occasion's sole purpose was to pay "high tribute to the sacred cause of peace." In this paragraph Bunche attempted to solve the problem of how to accept a peace award during a war. Basically, he tried to solve the problem by ignoring the fact that the UN was losing a war in Korea while he was speaking. Like the word "Negro", neither the word "Korea" nor "war" appeared anywhere in his speech. While Dr. Bunche did try to give the ceremony some meaning, "special symbolic significance" of any kind meant absolutely nothing to the thousands of men who died the day Bunche accepted his Peace Prize.

By ignoring the grim realities of segregation and the Korean War, Dr. Bunche's speech was a failure. On December 10, 1950, Dr. Ralph Bunche was "window dressing" not only to the Black community, but to the world as well.[30]

Statement of acceptance by

Ralph J. Bunche,
Principal Director,
Department of Trusteeship and
Information from Non-Self-
Governing Territories,
United Nations,

on the Occasion of the
Presentation of the
Nobel Peace Prize,

10 December, 1950, at 1:00 p.m.
in the Aula of the University
of Oslo, Norway.

[29]Ralph Bunche, "Barriers of Race can be surmounted, Color has nothing to do with Worth," *Vital Speeches*, XV (July 1, 1949), 572 – 4.

[30]Only after examining all of the demanding situations in Dr. Bunche's life could the suspicions about this old Negro leader be confirmed or rejected. This paper made no attempt to attach a label to Dr. Bunche's life on the basis of one situation.



Your Majesty,
Your Royal Highnesses,
Mr. President of the Nobel Committee,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

To be honored by one's fellow men is a rich and pleasent experience. But to receive the uniquely high honor here bestowed today, because of the world view of Alfred Nobel long ago, is an overwhelming experience. To the President and members of the Nobel Committee I may say of their action, which at this hour finds its culmination, only that I am appreciative beyond the puny power of words to convey. I am inspired by your confidence.

I am not unaware, of course, of the special and broad significance of this award – far transcending its importance or significance to me as an individual – in an imperfect and restive world in which inequalities among peoples, racial and religious bigotries, prejudices and taboos are endemic and stubbornly persistent. From this northern land has come a vibrant note of hope and inspiration for vast millions of people whose bitter experience has impressed upon them that color and inequality are inexorably concomitant.

There are many who figuratively stand beside me today and who are also honored here. I am but one of many cogs in the United Nations, the greatest peace organization ever, dedicated to the salvation of mankind's future on earth. It is, indeed, itself an honor to be enabled to practice the arts of peace under the aegis of the United Nations.

As I now stand before you, I cannot help but reflect on the never-failing support and encouragement afforded me, during my difficult assignment in the Near East, by Trygve Lie, and by his Executive Assistant, Andrew Cordier. Nor can I forget any of the more than 700 valiant men and women of the United Nations Palestine Mission who loyally served with Count Bernadotte and me, who were devoted servants of the cause of peace, and without whose tireless and fearless assistance our mission must surely have failed. At this moment, too, I recall, all too vividly and sorrowfully, that ten members of that mission gave their lives in the noble cause of peace-making.

But above all, there was my treasured friend and former chief, Count Folke Bernadotte, who made the supreme sacrifice to the end that Arabs and Jews should be returned to the ways of peace. Scandinavia, and the peace-loving world at large, may long revere his memory, as I shall do, as shall all of those who participated in the Palestine peace effort under his inspiring command.

In a dark and perilous hour of human history, when the future of all mankind hangs fatefully in the balance, it is of special symbolic significance that in Norway, this traditionally peace-loving nation, and among such friendly and kindly people of great good will, this ceremony should be held for the exclusive purpose of paying high tribute to the sacred cause of peace on earth, good will among men.

# RHETORICAL IMPLICATIONS OF SOUL ON ICE

by

Steve R. Dowd, Senior in Speech, U.C., Davis

Lloyd Bitzer defines rhetoric as a means of altering reality.[1] Black Americans have attempted to alter reality since the institution of slavery. Throughout history, the despair of the Negro is evident as he reacts to his status. The violence of Nat Turner, Frederick Douglass as part of the Abolitionist Movement, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Dubois' Niagra Movement, the N.A.A.C.P., Martin Luther King, and Malcolm X exemplify the variety of appeals employed by blacks. In attempting to understand why Negroes have been forced to "cool it" for so long and to understand rhetorical strategies as responses to their situation, one should first realize the connotations of 'soul' as it has been adapted by black Americans.

Soul, as an ideology, ministers to the needs for identity and solidarity.[2] By recognizing the Negro problem as one of self-hatred, the lack of self-esteem, and even the lack of self, one sees meaning to soul. One young black said: "Soul is what moves us, makes us want to be different than we were before, makes us know that we are black and that is great and we ain't gonna be no whitey's boy no more. Dig?"[3] For the Negro, soul encourages pride in his blackness. It also emphasizes a superior capacity for emotional authenticity, which, from a rhetorical standpoint, is an attractive characteristic to incorporate into one's image. Soul relates to the erotic, frenetic, and ecstatic claim to emotional depth and contrasts such depth with an emotional shallowness or emptiness imputed to middle-class America. Soul radiates pureness, feeds on truth, and "puts all you have into it." Significantly, it is a step in legitimizing black culture, an attempt to give value to blackness. To say that soul is on ice is to express the fear that the black nationalist movement is approaching futility. It is to say that soul and black aspirations are imprisoned by a white morality. The nature of black oppression, the importance of a black culture, and the possibility of a pluralistic society have given continual rise to black rhetoric.[4]

Eldridge Cleaver's book, *Soul On Ice*, is one of the more prominent rhetorical devices of the current black liberation struggle. It provides a full-time revolutionary's view of society. The manner in which Cleaver articulates a first-hand experience as a black man in America serves two purposes. He addresses black men in the hope that they might identify their status and react to it; he addresses white men in an attempt to achieve empathy with the 'black cause.' The essence of blackness takes on a new meaning as Cleaver emphasizes the significance of unity among blacks and the importance of a black culture. Cleaver's strategy is explicit. He attempts to provoke a reaction from his audiences in the recognition of a black culture. He wants black men to identify as 'brothers' and white men to understand racial equality. Implicit in his writing is the possibility, or perhaps the necessity, of a pluralistic society. Black men can understand this idea as a common goal; white men can understand it as a foreshadowing or even a forewarning of what is to come. In addressing Americans, Cleaver writes, "We shall have our manhood. We shall have it or the earth will be leveled by our attempts to gain it."[5] This is Cleaver's primary message to his audience; he demands an awakening by white Americans. This theme warrants rhetorical evaluation. The meanings and implications of Cleaver's writing, as they relate to black oppression, black culture, and pluralistic society, must be examined in order to understand this theme and ultimately to understand the black revolutionary mind.

In the part of the book, "Blood of the Beast," Cleaver describes what he feels is black oppression. He quotes Frederick Douglass:

[1]Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, Vol. 1, (Jan. 1968), p. 4.

[2]Charles Keil, *Urban Blues*, (Chicago, 1966), p. 164.

[3]Keil, p. 177.

[4]Bennett M. Berger, "Black Culture and the Planning of Pluralistic Environment," an unpublished essay, Symposium of the School of Environmental Design at the University of California, Berkeley, 1967.

[5]Eldridge Cleaver, "Initial Reactions on the Assassination of Malcolm X," *Soul On Ice*, (New York, 1968), p. 61.

> "You invite to your shores fugitives of oppression from abroad, honor them with banquets, greet them with ovations, cheer them, toast them, salute them, protect them, and pour out your money to them like water; but the fugitive from your own land you advertise, hunt, shoot, and kill. You glory in your refinement and your universal education; yet you maintain a system as barbarous and dreadful as ever stained the character of a nation -- a system begun in avarice, supported in pride, and perpetuated in cruelty."[6]

Cleaver charges that Americans are schizophrenic, having two contrary images of themselves. The most alienated citizens imagine that the nation is perpetrating gross injustices and cruelities. Their image imputes to America fraud, impiety, deception, and hypocrisy. The contrary image projects a belief in America as founded upon the condition of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Cleaver reasons that because these images are contradictions, they had to be kept apart. He emphasizes the significance of divided sentiment and proposes that the white man, in an attempt to justify slavery and segregation, created an all-pervasive myth which classified the black man as a "sub-human beast of burden." Carrying through this line of reason, Cleaver writes that during slavery blacks were seen as "Mindless Super-Masculine Menials." The images, black and white, were based on the social function of the two races -- the work they performed. The ideal white man was one who knew how to use his head; he knew how to manage and control things. The ideal black man was one who followed instructions effectively and cheerfully. In describing a black man's perspective to the illusion of Negro inferiority, Cleaver invents for his audience a sexual-social myth concerning the relationships of black men and white women. The white man, striving to be the brain (Omnipotent Administrator), wants the blacks to be the muscle. The white man has turned the white woman into a weak bodied 'sex-pot' and the black woman into a strong, self-reliant Amazon. One aspect of this myth is the applause for black achievement in sports, but hatred for like achievement in intellectual endeavors.

Cleaver's myth is rhetorically interesting as it illustrates the white man's maintenance of the status quo -- the Negro as inferior. Another device used to maintain this imbalance, as Cleaver understands it. is the labeling of everything the blacks do with the prefix "Negro" (e.g. Negro literature, Negro athletes, Negro music, etc.). In Cleaver's eyes, this "prefixing" is but another example of the extent of white discrimination. Ignoring the possibility that such labeling could be an innocent distinction, Cleaver feels that prefixing anything with "Negro" automatically consigns it to an inferior category.

[6]Cleaver, Blood of the Beast," p. 76.

This assumption becomes more believable when one recognizes a common form of white prejudice. Whites often ask, in an attempt to substantiate attitudes of superiority, "Why have so many Negroes, unlike the European immigrants, been unable to escape from the ghetto and from poverty?"[7] *The United States Riot Commission Report* answers by pointing to a maturing economy, an elitist political system, and to cultural factors in summarizing a history of discrimination.

Having portrayed the nature of black oppression through myths, Cleaver addresses the reader's attention to a second problem among blacks, that of identifying a black culture. In understanding a black culture, it is practical to conceive of an 'American Negro sub-culture.' Cleaver feels that a black growing up in America is indoctrinated with the white race's standard of beauty, exemplified in his poem "To a White Girl".[8] Charles Keil notes intricate strategies developed by blacks in an effort to cope with America. He quotes Ralph Ellison:

> "Thus, since most so-called Negro-cultures outside Africa are necessarily amalgams, it would seem more profitable to stress the term culture and leave the term Negro out of the discussion."[9]

Ellison contends that the Negro's time and historic sense are American, and that his secular values are those professed by all people of the United States. He visualizes a parody of the traditional American lust for material possessions -- conspicious consumption. Cleaver illustrates black obsession for American status symbols in a conversation with inmates at Folsom Prison. In a quest to discover if black men do indeed prefer white women over black women (white indoctrination of beauty), he was told: "I don't want nothing black but a Cadillac," and, "If money was black, I wouldn't want none of it."

When considering the importance of a culture to blacks, one cannot underestimate or even ignore black accomplishments. Charles Silberman belittles Negro culture and concludes that in contrast to European immigrants, "The Negro has been completely stripped of his past and severed from any culture save that of the United States."[10] Cleaver by no means ignores the existence of self-hatred, the internalization of one's oppressor's standards. He makes known an ethnic self-hatred which often takes the form of a racial death wish. He contends that many Negroes believe, as the principle of assimilation into white America implies, that the race problem in America cannot be settled until all traces of the black race are eliminated. Cleaver's writing

[7]Otto Kerner, ed., *Report of the National Advisory Commission On Civil Disorders*, (New York, 1968), p. 1

[8]Cleaver, "Letters From Prison," p. 13.

[9]Keil, p. 6.

[10]Keil, p. 7

emphasizes the racial death wish of American Negroes which manifests itself in the widespread use of cosmetics to bleach the black out of one's skin and, in the extreme, undergoing nose-thinning and lip-clipping operations. Cleaver writes that "the price of hating other human beings is loving oneself less."[11] In Elijah Muhammad's words, "the Negro wants to be everything but himself."[12]

By means of an invented sexual-social myth, Cleaver translates black accomplishments and asks for a self-pride among blacks. He portrays the blacks' 'body' image as purposive in integrating Mind and Body. He writes:

> "Th' bargain which seems to have been struck is that the whites have had to turn to the blacks for a clue on how to swing with the Body, while the blacks had to turn to whites for the secret of the Mind. Apparently it was Chubby Checker's mission to teach the whites how to shake their asses again."[13]

Cleaver's image of Body making contact with its Mind exemplifies for the reader that special domain of Negro culture where black men have proved and preserved their humanity. Derived is a black consciousness that "I've got a mind of my own." This fact, plus the rhetoric of the soul movement, gives strength to black culture. The manner in which Cleaver deals with 'black culture' has an alternative rhetorical purpose. He desires acknowledgement of racial equality and suggests the following white reactions: "If that black ape is a man, then what am I?"[14]

By relating the nature of black oppression and voicing the importance of a black culture, *Soul On Ice* is implicitly con cerned with the struggle for cultural pluralism. Cleaver writes:

> "To understand what is at stake here, and to understand it in terms of the life of this nation, is to know the central fact that the relationship between black and white in America is a power equation, a power struggle, and that this power struggle is not only manifested in the aggregate (civil rights, black nationalism, etc.), but also in the interpersonal relationships, actions, and reactions between blacks and whites were taken into account."[15]

In other words, Cleaver is concerned with the contradictions of cultural unity and cultural diversity. If four hundred years of hostility towards blacks is to serve as evidence, then the melting pot idea is not a plausible solution to the black problem. What emerges as feasible is the pluralistic idea, the image of American culture as a summation of equally legitimate sub-cultures, largely insulated but making occasional contact.

[11]Cleaver, "Letters From Prison," p. 17.

[12]Berger, p. 5.

[13]Cleaver, "White Woman, Black Man," p. 192.

[14]Cleaver, "Blood of the Beast," p. 94.

[15]Cleaver, "Blood of the Beast," p. 118.

The idea of a diverse culture presupposes the concept of pluralism. E. Franklin Frazier once wrote that the Negro's primary struggle in America "has been to acquire a culture – customs, values, and forms of expressio., which, transmitted from generation to generation, provides a people with a sense of its own integrity and collective identify."[16] American history issustrates that a group cannot achieve integration without first developing institutions which express and create a sense of its own distinctiveness. The civil rights movement has not lent itself to the question of how Negroes are to acquire their own culture, but addresses itself to legal inequalities. The adopting of 'soul', the Black Muslim movement, the Black Panthers, feelings of "I'm black and I'm proud," although counterparts to racial separtism, represent a revival of Negro-American nationalism. New style nationalists – advocates of Black Power – view their movement as a revolution against American "colonialism." Stokely Carmichael is reported to have said, "Our enemy is white Imperialistic Society; our struggle is to overthrow the system which feeds itself and expands itself through the economic and cultural exploitation of non-white, non-Western peoples."[17] The black man is becoming aware of himself and taking a pride in his culture. He is demanding what he feels is his, and will literally burn the cities in an attempt to gain it. Seemingly, the fact of black oppression has resulted in diverse interests between blacks and whites which, in turn, have evolved into diverse cultures. Cleaver ultimately implies that cultural pluralism has become the necessary means to social harmony.

Through *Soul On Ice*, Black Panther leader Cleaver makes an emotional appeal to America in demanding structural changes in society. He wants a redistribution of power, "so that we have control over our own lives."[18] In an interview with Playboy's Nat Hentoff, Cleaver recounts proposals by the Black Panther party: "We want land, we want money, we want justice, we want peace."[19] Cleaver feels that black people are angry about preparations for the suppression of the black liberation struggle in this country. He reflects upon how black people, who have had a knife in their backs for four hundred years, are able to endure the continued escalation of police force and brutality. Charles Lomas writes that "the rhetoric of revolution sees violence as inevitable, and urges its listeners to arm and orga-

[16]Berger, p. 10.

[17]Paul Goodman "Reflections on Racism, Spite, Guilt, and Violence," *The New York Review*, Volume 10, no. 10, (May 23, 1968), p. 31.

[18]Cleaver, "Blood of the Beast," p. 135.

[19]Nat Hentoff, "A Candid Conversation with Eldridge Cleaver," *Playboy*, Volume 15, no. 12, (Chicago, Dec. 1968), p. 95.

nize; but the time and place for the ultimate act will be determined by violence initiated by the police."[20] Eldridge Cleaver distinguishes between two forms of violence – violence directed at you to keep you in your place, and violence to defend yourself against that suppression. He feels that if black demands are not met, if "blackness" continues to matter, black Americans will sooner or later have to make a choice between "continuing to be victims or deciding to seize our freedom."

Soul is on ice, in a precarious state, dangling between two cultures. Evidence for alleviation of these conditions is found in the Negro Revolution, with emphasis on pride and identity, as well as in voting, housing, and job rights. The revolt is a call for unity among blacks, an attempt to establish sources of black power, political and economic, by which to press for rights, and most importantly, to legitimize their culture. Cleaver addresses the black American mind when he emphasizes that black people as a whole must gain power. It is not a question of where you are geographically if you're black, it is a question of where you are psychologically. The black nationalist movement, as intended by Black Panthers, attempts to organize and concentrate its power among blacks because an amorphous thing pulling in all directions is of no avail. This concentration does not suggest that there is to be no inter-connection with white groups who also recognize the need for fundamental change. Black Power is, in part, a manifestation of the New Left. Cleaver proposes that the initiative and future of the black movement rests with both whites and blacks who have liberated themselves from the master/slave syndrome. In addressing the white youth of today, Cleaver hopes that they will escape the onus of history by facing and admitting the moral truth concerning the works of their fathers. He characterizes four stages of revolution, the fourth being in its infancy now. He writes:

> "The characteristics of the white rebels which most alarm their elders – the long hair, the new dances, their love for Negro music, their use of marijuana, their mystical attitude towards sex – are all tools of their rebellion. They have turned these tools against the totalitarian fabric of American society – and they mean to change it."[21]

Ultimately, the movement towards a culturally pluralistic society rests upon the distinction between sub-cultural preservation and social segregation. The success of other ethnic sub-cultures was due to the segregation of their social systems, clear territorial boundaries, and distinctive institutional structures (economic, religious, political, etc.). Cleaver does not appeal for separation as derived from the "separate but equal" doctrine, in this instance arbitrarily imposed, but for separation ample to provide an opportunity for a full life.

*Soul On Ice*, written in prison by a black American, or Afro-American, not only accentuates what a black man, reacting to a society he detests, finally becomes, but also is a rhetorical plea for all Americans to open their eyes. "Souls of black folk," in W.E.B. DuBois' phrase, are the best mirror in which to see the white American self in mid-twentieth century. With Cleaver's soul as an orientation, readers of this book are better able to visualize the complexity of the black experience.

[20]Charles Lomas, "Rhetoric of Violence," "*The Agitator in American Society*," (New Jersey, 1968), p. 27.

[21]Cleaver, "Blood of the Beast," p. 75.

# THE SPIRIT OF NANCY ASTOR

## by

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Nancy Astor would have laughed to be termed an orator. She once remarked, "I'm no orator and don't want to be. I've heard too many fine phrases from the emptiest heads in Europe."[1] By traditional standards of evaluation, those standards used to evaluate the rhetorjc of another era and another sex, perhaps she would not rank high. Despite her self-deprecation, however, this Virginia-born viscountess for a quarter of a century gave the British House of Commons a special form of public speaking. It was feminine, frivolous, impetuous, brash, bold, witty, and decidedly unusual. If one could not call her one of the best orators of her time, the irrepressible spirit and unique style which she displayed made her a speaker difficult to forget.

It would be hard to imagine a more unlikely American contribution to the British Parliament in either background or education. She was born Nancy Witcher Langhorne on May 19, 1879, "one of the Famous Five Virginians, all daughters of Chiswell Dabney Langhorne, who had made a fortune building the Chesapeake and Ohio across the mountains in Kentucky."[2] At Mirador, the family estate, young Nancy learned the graces of a genteel Virginian woman – how to be a charming hostess, how to run a large house, and how to ride horses. Her formal education was scanty.[3] Her sister, Irene, was married to Charles Dana Gibson, and became immortalized as the Gibson Girl. Nancy, too, had fine features – "medium blonde with fine eyes, slender figure, erect, and graceful, she had the saucy manner that betokened the ending of the Victorian age of womanly demureness."[4] Her marriage to Robert Gould Shaw II in 1897 swept her as a belle from the Newport spotlight into another at Pride's Crossing, as hostess to the Country Club set. The glitter faded, however, upon the stark realization that her husband was an alcoholic. In 1903 she packed up her bags and her son, and divorced Shaw on statutory grounds. This aversion to the unpleasant manifestations of alcohol later became one of her most ardent causes in the House of Commons.

The young, attractive divorcee found her way into even more exciting circles when she was introduced to English society. On an ocean voyage to England, she met Waldorf Astor, son of William Waldorf Astor, a former American with a newly-acquired British citizenship and title. Their relationship blossomed by virtue of their mutual likes – hunting and horses, and dislikes – alcohol and tobacco. In 1906 they were married, despite the elder Astor's disapproval of the union of his son to both an *American* and a *divorcee!* His wedding gifts to the couple, however, did not display any ill feelings. Waldorf was presented Cliveden, an elegant mansion containing thirty guest rooms and requiring a staff of twenty to run it. To Nancy he gave a $75,000 tiara. Thus from birth to her late twenties, Nancy Astor gave no indication of her future role as a member of Parliament.

Cliveden soon became, and remained for many years, the gathering place for England and America's most celebrated and controversial people, even the King himself. The saucy wit that charmed many was especially delightful to Edward VII. On one visit Nancy Astor's "rivals tried to break up a tête-à-tête with the King by asking them to play bridge. 'But I wouldn't know a King from a knave,' she protested, while Edward laughed uproariously."[5] Her piercing brand of humor gave birth to other clever anecdotes and the name "Astorisms" to denote them.

In 1910, Nancy Astor's life gained a new dimension when her husband was elected to a Conservative in the House of Commons from a lower-class constituency in Plymouth. She campaigned with him and began to speak publicly for the first time.[6] Her campaign style was to characterize her for the rest of her life: "Her technique was simple; she just got to her feet and talked in an unihibited and spirited a fashion as if she were in her drawing room. She found she enjoyed the experience."[7] Through

[1]Clement Richard Attlee, "My Most Unforgettable Character," *Reader's Digest*, LXXXV, (1964), p. 82.

[2]Harvey O'Connor, *The Astors*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941), p. 399.

[3]Attlee, p. 83.

[4]O'Connor, p. 399.

[5]*Ibid.*, p. 400.

[6]Attlee, p. 83.

[7]*Ibid.*

her husband's tutelage, she learned much about social reform and political life. When the First World War broke out, the Astors opened their Cliveden estate to the war-wounded. By visiting with the wounded servicemen, a great many from the working class, Nancy Astor grew to understand their problems and their dreams. The period 1910 – 1919 marked the transition from a lady of society to dedicated social reformer.

In 1919 William Waldorf Astor died, making his son the second Lord Astor, and causing him to give up his seat in the House of Commons for a seat in the House of Lords. At her husband's urging, Lady Astor campaigned for the seat vacated by him and won easily. A year earlier women had received the right to vote and the world was eager to view how this newly-acquired privilege would be used. As the first woman to sit in the House of Commons, Nancy, as even strangers called her, found herself in a new spotlight.

A political body, masculine from its earliest days, did not easily accept an alien in its midst. Many resented the new female Member's presence and snubbed her.[8] One of these was Winston Churchill. "Later Lady Astor asked him why. Churchill candidly explained, 'I felt when you entered the House of Commons as if a woman had entered my bathroom and I'd nothing to protect myself except the sponge.' To which Nancy replied, 'Did it ever occur to you that your appearance might have been protection enough?' "[9] Under these inauspicious conditions, the first woman member of a previously all-male Parliament, Nancy Astor began her political career. Perhaps out of necessity she developed her flamboyant speaking style, in an effort to get a proper hearing from her fellow Members.

How can one define a speaker whose capricious nature seems to defy categorization and definition? I have chosen the word "spirit", broadly defined, as embodying the essential qualities of Nancy Astor's public speaking. "Spirit" holds the concept of a lively and brisk quality, an element of courage, an animating source of inspiration and dedication, an impulsiveness, an element of feminism.

The most obvious observation about Nancy Astor is that she was a woman, a factor which so greatly influenced everything she did and said. Her causes were predominately charged with feminine motivation. Her maiden speech to the House of Commons on February 24, 1920, dealt with the problems of the liquor traffic in post-World War One. She deplored the rise of convictions of women for drunkenness following the modification of war-time liquor controls. She then told of an incident, personnally witnessed when visiting one of the parts of her constituency:

> . . . [I] stopped outside a public house where I saw a child about five years old waiting for its mother. It did not have to wait long. Presently she reeled out. The child went forward to her, but soon it retreated. Oh the oaths and curses of the poor woman and the shrieks of that child as it fled from her . . . That is what goes on when you have increased drunkenness among women. I am thinking of the women and children. I am not so tremendously excited about what you call the freedom of the men. The men will get their freedom . . . I only want them to condider others.[10]

Again her feminine perspective is visible upon reading her speech to the House on October 17, 1939, concerning Dependent's Allowances. A certain amount of money was given by the Government for the support of soldiers' and sailors' dependents. However, the scales for distribution were so discrepant that certain children were almost totally neglected. Lady Astor stated: " . . . all sections of people in the country feel strongly about the inadequacies of the allowances to children. The Government cannot dodge the issue . . . This demand represents the feeling of all sections of the country that even in war women and children should come first."[11] As a woman, she was determined to upgrade living and working conditions for women. As a mother, she sought to eliminate hunger and other misfortunes besetting the nation's youth.

One can also observe that the petite viscountess was decidedly not an intellectual. Those who heard her speak agreed upon this fact: "Her qualities are not of the head, but of the heart and spirit. She is embodied emotion . . ."[12] It was also agreed that "it is not her opinions . . . that make her so unprecedented a figure in English public life, but the gallop of the spirit with which she enters the lists, her terrific pugnacity, and her gay indifference to the formal 'respectabilities' of behavior."[13] Her best friend Lord Lothian, the former Philip Kerr, once impatiently remarked: "Oh, Nancy, wait a minute! If you'd just think two minutes on any one subject you'd be the greatest woman in England."[14]

A contemporary noted: "She is clearly not an intellectual woman, and her influence in politics, which is rather greater than is generally thought, is due to purely feminine qualities. Conspicuous among these qualities are mother wit and a ready tongue, simplicity, [and] naturalness . . ."[15]

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, CXXV, Fifth Series, cols. 1625 – 1626.

[11] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, CCCLII, Fifth Series, cols, 781 – 782.

[12] A. G. Gardiner, *Portraits and Portents*, (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1926), p. 188.

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 189 – 190.

[14] O'Connor, p. 431.

[15] Herbert Sidebotham, *Pillars of the State*, (London, England: Nisbet and Company, Ltd., 1921), p. 178.

Clearly, much of Nancy Astor's speaking success was due not to any intellectual capacity, although she was a fairly intelligent woman, but to other factors. Her most memorable quality was an incisive wit that knew no bounds. She began her maiden speech with a sly reference to the reluctance of the House to accept her: "I shall not begin by craving the indulgence of the House. [This is a customary opening remark for its speakers.] I am only too conscious of the indulgence and the courtesy of the House."[16] On another occasion, a heckler tried to get the best of her. " 'Say missus, how many toes are there on a pig's foot?' Nancy's reply was memorable: 'Take off your boot, man, and count for yourself.' "[17] Her sarcasm and audacity were not confined to her own speechmaking. The remarks of other Members were frequently punctuated by quips and exclamations of "Boo!" "Rubbish!" when she disapproved of their views.[18] Her behavior sometimes drew criticism from the more sedate English: "Her repartee in the House of Commons seems to me most often cheap and suburban . . . These word-slinging scenes with which she enlivens the House have no vestige of dignity and are certainly not womanly . . ."[19] Nancy's irreverent attitude, although amusing, deflated the pompous and a bit more human.

Nancy Astor had an ability to reduce issues to their simplest terms. She had " . . . the simple, direct logic that gets things done."[20] In her maiden speech she reduced the drink question to national efficiency versus national inefficiency.[21] The question of dependent's allowances was reduced to the injustice to children because the government had miscalculated their needs.[22] It was noted of her, "In spite of her millions, it is noticeable that the average working man gets her woman's point of view much more quickly than the average middle-class man."[23] Her feminine manner of simplifying matters to a "common-sense" approach was one of her distinguishing characteristics.

She carried with her to the House a womanly sense of morality and propriety evident in both her speech on Dependent's Allowances and in the Family Allowances Bill speech given March 8, 1945. She upset her fellow Members by asserting in her Dependent's speech that an unmarried woman residing with a soldier should receive no dependent's benefits. "It has been said, 'If we do not give the allowance what will the girl do?' I say that if a girl lives with a man for six months when she can marry him and does not marry him, she is the sort of girl who will manage somehow."[24] The Family Allowances Bill was designed to allot a sum of money for necessities for each child in a family. During discussion of the bill, a fellow Member stated that mothers of illegitimate children were some of the finest women in the country. " . . . I cannot say that," Lady Astor replied. "I, myself, always have thought that women who resist temptation are finer than women who give way to it . . . That is, where I disagree, but some of the finest mothers in the country are mothers of an illegitimate child, and if the Government could make a concession in respect of such children, it would be a very good thing."[25]

Lady Astor spoke plainly and with courage. "If you are never to speak because you are afraid to cause offense, you will never say anything. I am not in the least afraid of causing offense,"[26] she said at the close of her career. This courage, coupled with her simple, yet forceful, speaking style made her England's most memorable woman speaker of her time. Nancy Astor is a study in ethos – a case where spirit and character overshadow all other aspects of rhetoric.

[16]Debates, H. C., CXXV, col. 1623.

[17]Attlee, p. 81.

[18]*Ibid.*, p. 82.

[19]"Omega" (pseudonym, author not given), "Lady Astor." *Saturday Review*, CLV, p. 186.

[20]Sidebotham, p. 178.

[21]Debates, H.C., CXXV, col. 1624.

[22]Debates, H.C., CCCLII, col. 779.

[23]Sidebotham, p. 176.

[24]Debates, H.C., CCCLII, col. 781.

[25]Debates, H.C., CDVIII, col. 2333.

[26]*Ibid.*, col. 2334.

# EUGENE V. DEBS — A CASE OF RHETORICAL FAILURE

by

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Eugene V. Debs, spokesman for revolutionary socialism, was a rhetorical failure. Because he failed to employ stylistic identifications in his attempts to persuade, he did not adapt to audiences in general. Professor Bernard Brommel, in his doctoral dissertation, notes that during Debs' speaking career, which spanned nearly one-half century, he made over six thousand speeches.[1] Before 1897 he spoke for organized labor and industrial unionism; after 1897 he was an active campaigner for revolutionary socialism. He was the party's candidate for President five times.[2]

Perhaps Debs' failure to adapt stemmed from his emphasis on class struggle. According to Ray Ginger, his biographer, he approached every issue from the standpoint of class question.[3] During Debs' speaking career as a revolutionary Socialist, he based his remarks on the premise that there were two classes of society – capitalists and wage slaves. Capitalists exploited the wage slaves; therefore, capitalism was responsible for all evil in the world. Socialism would eliminate capitalism; therefore, wage slaves should unite in political action to overthrow capitalism.

By his insistence on his philosophy of class struggle he made it difficult, if not impossible, for many persons to identify with him. For instance, in 1899 Debs made a speech to the exclusive Nineteenth Century Club in New York City on "Prison Labor, Its Effects on Industry and Trade." Debs said:

> I must confess that it would have suited my purpose better had the subject been transposed so as to read: "Industry and Trade, Their Effect on Labor," for, as a Socialist, I am convinced that the prison problem is rooted in the present system of industry and trade, . . .
> . . . . . .
> It is therefore with the economic system, which is responsible for, not only prison labor, but for the gradual enslavement and degradation of all labor, that we must deal . . .[4]

First of all, twisting the topic around to his favorite theme probably did nothing to promote identification with Debs' cause. In addition, the audience should have been expected to have difficulty identifying with conditions with which the members had had little or no experience. Finally, his hearers might have had considerable difficulty identifying with the picture Debs painted of themselves in the role of capitalist oppressors. Apparently, Debs' performance contrasted sharply with Aristotle's dictum that in political oratory . . . " it adds much to an orator's influence that . . . he should be thought to entertain the right feelings towards his hearers; . . . "[5]

As the Socialist candidate for President in 1904, Debs had shown no effort to adapt to audiences in general. In his opening speech he stated:

> The twenty-five millions of wage-workers in the United States are twenty-five millions of twentieth century slaves. . . . . .
> They who buy and they who sell in the labor market are alike dehumanized by the inhuman traffic in the brains and blood and bones of human beings.[6]

Although Socialists could identify with his words because these were party doctrines mouthed over and over by the members themselves, non-Socialists could hardly see themselves as slaves. They had the vote, they could go anywhere they pleased, and they did not get off the sidewalk when the boss walked by. If the revolutionary Socialists in particular could identify with Debs, then it would appear that both Democrats and Republicans would divide from him.

But, Debs also experienced difficulty adapting to organized labor. By identifying with the revolutionary Industrial Workers of the World,[7] he iso-

[1] See the unpubl. diss. (Bloomington, Indiana, 1963) by Bernard J. Brommel, "Eugene V. Debs: Spokesman for Labor and Socialism," Preface.

[2] 1900, 1904, 1908, 1912, 1920.

[3] Ray Ginger, *The Bending Cross* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1949), p. 258.

[4] Eugene V. Debs, *Debs: His Life, Writings and Speeches* (St. Louis, 1908), pp. 346 – 347.

[5] Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans., W. Rhys Roberts; *Poetics*, trans., Ingram Bywater (New York; 1954), 1377b 27 – 28.

[6] Debs, p. 357.

[7] See Ginger, p. 242.

lated himself from the larger membership of the American Federation of Labor who were followers of reform movements. In his speech to the IWW in 1905 Debs stated that: " . . . the Industrial Workers . . . ultimate object is to entirely abolish the capitalist system, . . ."[8]

In contrast to Debs, Samuel Gompers, leader of the AFL, opposed the theory that labor should fight for socialism or for any other ultimate goal. His program was based on: "More: Here: Now."[9] According to H. Wayne Morgan, author of *Eugene V. Debs: Socialist for President*, Gompers once said to Debs: " . . . I am not only at variance with your doctrines, but with your philosophy. Economically you are unsound; socially you are wrong; industrially you are impossible."[10] Debs' revolutionary aims therefore, instead of uniting labor, divided it, and delivered the largest organized labor group,[11] the trade unions, into the reform camp.

In 1908 Eugene Debs was given the party nomination for President for the third time. He opened his campaign in the quiet little town of Girard, Kansas. Debs told his listeners:

> In this system we have one set who are called capitalists, and another set who are called workers; and they are at war with each other.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Eighty per cent of the people of the United States have no property today. A few have got it all. They have dispossessed the people, and when we get into power we will dispossess them.[12]

Furthermore, in speaking of farmers, Debs told his audience in Girard that:

> After his hard day's work is done, here he sits in his little shack. He is fed, and his animal wants are satisfied.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> He knows nothing about poetry or art. Never rises above the animal plane upon which he is living . . . That is life under the present standard.[13]

However, census records show that farming in Girard and the surrounding areas of Crawford County, Kansas, had taken a sharp upward swing in the decade between 1900 and 1910. Farm property, including land, buildings, livestock and machinery, had more than doubled in value in those ten years. Between eighty and ninety per cent of farm land in Crawford County was above average in quality and value.[14]

[8]Debs, p. 395.

[9]Ginger, p. 257.

[10]H. Wayne Morgan, *Eugene V. Debs: Socialist for President* (New York, 1962), p. 61.

[11]Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957* (Wash., D.C., 1960), D735 – 740, p. 97.

[12]Debs, pp. 488 – 489.

[13]*Ibid.*, p. 484.

[14]Dept. of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, Vol. VI, Agriculture (Wash., D.C., 1913), pp. 554 – 556.

Mr. Henderson Martin, Chairman of the Democratic State Committee for Kansas, stated after the Republicans won the 1908 election that: " . . . I believe the prosperity argument was the most potent one against us in Kansas. It appealed to the farmer with such force as to persuade him to overcome his admiration for Bryan, his fear of Wall Street domination and vote the Republican ticket."[15] Since farmers in general around the area did not fit Debs' description, it is difficult to see how very many could have found meaning, and thus identification, in his cause.

The campaign of 1908 featured the Red Special, a chartered train, decked with red bunting and loaded with Socialist literature. In sixty-five days,[16] as the train travelled from coast to coast, Debs spoke to 500,000[17] persons.

As the bank played the "Marseillaise"[18] and the crowd waved red flags[19] passed out to them by the Socialist workers, Debs mounted the platform and preached the overthrow of capitalism. The music and the red flags identified him with European socialism before he even began to speak. It is highly probable that the audience could have identified more readily with him if he had associated himself with "The Star-Spangled Banner" and the American flag. In the same manner the words "masses, proletariat, revolution, overthrow, comrade, and bourgeoisie" all had European connotations.

In California, Debs encountered his strongest opposition. Here too, Debs did not say much to promote identification with his cause. For instance, Brommel relates that in Berkeley a member of the audience asked: "If socialism went into effect, . . . how would it affect the Supreme Court and the Constitution of the United States?" Debs answered that: "If socialism went into effect, . . . we would not be ruled by a Constitution a hundred and twenty years old, or governed by the dead."[20] It is fairly safe to assume that Americans who had long revered the Constitution as the next thing to holy writ would not be inclined to identify with either Eugene Debs or socialism.

In view of the Socialist prediction of one and one-half million votes, the election of 1908 was a disappointment. The Socialist total of 420,793 was only four per cent higher than that of 1904, 402,283.[21]

[15]"PROSPERITY WON IN KANSAS – Democratic Chairman Admits It Was an Invincible Argument," Kansas City *Journal*, November 5, 1908, p. 4.

[16]Brommel, p. 106.

[17]Ginger, p. 283.

[18]Morgan, p. 103.

[19]*Ibid.*, p. 106.

[20]Brommel, pp. 88 – 89. Brommel's source is The Berkeley *Independent*, September 12, 1908, p. 1.

[21]*Historical Statistics*, Y27 – 31, p. 682.

and less than three per cent of the total vote cast. The total vote cast in the United States in 1908 was up ten per cent over that of 1904, indicating that the four per cent rise in the Socialist vote fell far short of their reasonable share of the increase.

In retrospect, David A. Shannon, author of *The Socialist Party of America*, observes in relation to the Socialist election campaigns, that: "If all the people who subscribed to the *Appeal to Reason* to read Debs' editorials, and who paid their money to hear Debs speak, had voted for Debs as they cheered for Debs, his percentage of the popular vote would have been considerably higher than it ever was."[22]

Perhaps one can gain some insight into Debs' failure by noting Kenneth Burke's statement that the rhetorician who wants to change his audience's opinion in one respect can only succeed insofar as he yields to his audience's opinions in other respects.[23] Debs yielded to nothing except his own conscience. According to Ginger: "His conscience was the Great Umpire, and Debs was the only spectator near enough to hear the umpire's decisions."[24] One who identifies with rigidity divides from adaptation. Brommel says that in 1911, " . . . Debs cautioned his followers to keep out of the party those who would not endorse socialism as a working class revolutionary enterprise. He feared that the party might become 'permeated and corrupted with the spirit of bourgeois reform to an extent that would practically destroy its virility and efficiency as a revolutionary organization."[25]

As the war years loomed, Debs found another evil to blame on capitalism. The culmination of his anti-war speaking came in Canton, Ohio, on June 16, 1918. He maintained that:

> Wars throughout history have been waged for conquest and plunder . . . The feudal barons of the Middle Ages, the economic predecessors of the capitalists of our day, declared all wars. And their miserable serfs fought all the battles . . . The master class has always declared the wars; the subject class has always fought the battles.[26]

Debs was arrested four days after this speech and charged on four counts with violating the Espionage Act. His trial was held September 11, 1918, in the Federal Court at Cleveland, Judge Westonhaver presiding.[27] Debs appeared as the only witness for the defense. His audience was a very select group, each of the twelve jurors being about seventy-two years of age and worth from fifty to sixty thousand dollars each. All were retired from business; seven were former merchants or farmers.[28] Debs made no apparent attempt to adapt to his jury. He said to them:

> Standing before you, charged as I am with crime, I can yet look the court in the face, I can look you in the face, I can look the world in the face, for in my conscience, in my soul, there is festering no accusation of guilt . . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> I would not retract a word that I have uttered that I believe to be true to save myself from going to the penitentiary for the rest of my days.
> . . . . . .
> I admit being opposed to the present social system. I am doing what little I can, . . . to bring about a change that shall do away with the rule of the great body of the people by a relatively small class and establish in this country an industrial and social democracy.[29]

Although no one knows what decision the jury would have brought in had Debs adapted to them, it is equally clear that his failure to adapt counted against him. The New York *Times* reports that Judge Westonhaver in passing sentence stated: "I appreciate defendant's sincerity, I may admire his courage, but I cannot help wishing he might take better note of facts as they are in the world at the present time."[30]

Clearly, Debs, the apostle of revolutionary socialism, failed to adapt his message to audiences in general. His unyielding commitment to class struggle made his task of persuasion extremely difficult. In his analysis of American socialism, Shannon[31] has pointed out that there was no feudal tradition in America, no aristocracy based on birth against which the middle class needed to revolt. The citizen had always had the vote which left only social and economic lines between him and propertied men. The abundance of cheap land made property ownership possible to a large number of people. The growth of the economy made possible a high degree of class mobility. The able and ambitious made the rags-to-riches transition a visible fact. The relative success of American capitalism produced a better standard of living for each generation that was just a little bit better than the last. In addition, Americans held "a pragmatic view of life" that demanded "visible and practical results, and the

[22]David A. Shannon. *The Socialist Party of America* (New York, 1955), p. 263.

[23]Kenneth A. Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (New York, 1955, p. 56.

[24]Ginger, p. 261.

[25]Brommel, p. 109.

[26]A. M. Schlesinger, Jr., ed., *Writings and Speeches of Eugene V. Debs* (New York, 1948), p. 425.

[27]Houston Peterson, ed., *A Treasury of the World's Great Speeches* (New York, 1954), p. 722.

[28]Ginger, p. 364.

[29]Schlesinger, pp. 433 – 434.

[30]New York *Times*, September 23, 1918, p. 7

[31]See Shannon, pp. 264 – 268.

quicker the better." They rejected the vague promises of the revolutionary Socialist in favor of the "half-a-loaf" offered at the time by the reform and progressive parties

Debs was a man following the path he set for himself – looking neigher to right nor left. He appeared to be so rigid in his thinking that he was unable to adapt satisfactorily to audiences.

On his deathbed Debs scrawled on a pad of paper with a shaky hand:

> It matters not how straight the gate,
> How charged with punishment the scroll,
> I am the master of my fate,
> I am the captain of my soul.[32]

32Ginger, p. 456. From "Invictus" by William Ernest Henley.

# STOKLEY CARMICHAEL: JAZZ ARTIST

by

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Three tragic, bewildering years have passed since the June evening in Greenwood, Mississippi, when "Black Power" as a term was unleashed by Stokely Carmichael. His oratory became the "Magna Carta" of a protest movement which may shape the destiny of America. The rhetorical significance and implications of Carmichael and black power have been established;[1] yet no critic has noted that Carmichael's oratory may be a natural outgrowth of Negro culture, especially its music. Carmichael's oratory contains the elements of content, organization, and style that are analogous to the unique Negro art of Jazz.

The relationship is natural. The arts of any culture function as a nonverbal storehouse of familiar forms and materials which any speaker can adapt as solutions to the practical problems of persuasion. Carmichael has drawn both form and content from the storehouse of jazz for his speeches to "brothers." Certain stipulations must be posited which apply equally to jazz and to Carmichael's oratory.

Orvil Dankworth characterizes pure jazz as "a specific kind of music . . . with quite strict rules," "an improvisatory art," "a feeling, a style."[2] Jazz is a small group thing that requires interaction both internally within the group, and externally with the audience. Likewise, Carmichael's oratory is group oriented with interaction vital to the desired effect. Jazz is also an "in-group" activity that comes alive only with the initiated. Likewise, Carmichael's oratory comes fully alive only when designed for an audience of "brothers." The Boston[3] and Whitewater[4] speeches illustrate Carmichael's adaptation to white audiences, containing "dignified" and "tame" messages. The Berkeley[5] and Detroit[6] speeches are examples that illustrate the thesis of this study, and involved black or pro-black power audiences.

In terms of message, Stokely Carmichael is "singing the blues" in the jazz tradition that grew out of the Negro spiritual.

> Oh, nobody knows de trouble I've seen
> Glory, hallelujah

Langston Hughes states:

> The blues are almost always sad songs, songs about being out of work, broke, hungry, far away from home . . . behind the sadness, there is almost always laughter and strength.[7]

The blues lyric organizes sadness and strength around a statement of hardship, a wish to escape to the promised land, and a coating of irony or humor; these elements are apparent in Carmichael's oratory as he describes white exploitation of black people:

> The missionaries came with the Bible and we had the land; when they left, they had the land, and we still had the Bible.[8]

Black power becomes the promised land, attainable but vague:

> And in order to get out of that oppression one must wield the group power that one has, not the individual power which this country then sets as the criteria under which a man may come into it.[9]

The same approach to message was employed in the Detroit speech:

> . . . It's only because we don't own and control our communities that they are the way they are.
>
> You've got to tell them that if we've got the money, the same amount of money that they put into their suburban schools, that we put in our schools, that we would produce black people who are just as capable of taking care of business, as they're producing white people. They've been stealing our money (applause) that's where the problem exists.[10]

[1]For example, see:
Robert L. Scott, "Justifying Violence – The Rhetoric of Militant Black Power." *CSSJ*, XIX (1968), 96 – 104.
Wayne Brockriede and Robert L. Scott, "Two Speeches on Black Power," *CSSJ*, XIX (1968), 130.
Parke G. Burgess, "The Rhetoric of Black Power: A Moral Demand?," *QJS*, XLIV (1968), 122 – 133.

[2]Orvil Dankworth, *Jazz: An Introduction to Its Musical Basis* (London, 1968), p. vii.

[3]Leon Friedman, ed., *The Civil Rights Reader* (New York: Walker and Company, 1967), pp. 139 – 148.

[4]Robert L. Scott and Wayne Brockriede, *The Rhetoric of Black Power* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), pp. 96 – 111.

[5]Charles M. Lomas. *The Agitator in American Society* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968).

[6]Scott and Brockriede, *The Rhetoric of Black Power*, pp. 84 – 95.

[7]Langston Hughes, *First Book of Jazz* (New York: Watts, 1954), p. 21.

[8]Lomas, pp. 140 – 141.

[9]Lomas, p. 141.

[10]Scott and Brockriede, *Rhetoric*, pp. 87 – 88.

The "blues" message has been identified and discussed by more moderate Negro leaders who believe that black power rhetoric is counter-productive to the long-range goals of the black man, and even harmful to the Negro psyche. In his last speech, Dr. King said: "I think the aura of paramilitarism among the black militant groups speaks much more of fear than it does of confidence."[11]

Dr. Kenneth Clark, noted Negro psychologist, characterizes the rhetoric as retrogressive, sour grapes thinking generated by the current status of the black man "at the threshold of a non-segregated society." Clark points to the frustration caused by tension between the legal right to pass through the door of racial equality and the absence of training and background prerequisite to passage. He concludes:

> Black power is a bitter retreat from the possibility of the attainment of the goals of any serious integration in America.
>
> It is an attempt to make a verbal virtue of involuntary racial segregation . . . the sour grapes phenomenon of the American racial scene.[12]

The message of Stokely Carmichael, though often viewed by whites as new and different, can be better understood and appreciated as an oratorical version of the message of Negro spirituals and jazz blues. Its acceptance by blacks is indicative of the current state of the ghetto psyche.

Jazz relates to music as oratory relates to language. Interaction between performer or speaker and the audience characterizes both media and produces a unification of style and organization into definable stylistic devices. Carmichael appears to draw heavily upon the stylistic devices developed by jazz musicians: individualization, aggressive use of materials, improvisation, omission, repetition, and audience participation.

The jazz man individualizes his style through combinations of "sound," and melodic and rhythmic tendencies recognizable to initiates as unique to an individual. A few seconds of Charlie Parker or Coleman Hawkins on a recording is identifiable. Stylistic uniqueness can be recognized in Stokely Carmichael's oratory, a unique, identifiable and memorable gestalt that amounts to "doing his thing." The jazz man swings and Stokely "tells it like it is," projecting his very personal image to those who dig.

As the jazz musician uses sound for his material, Carmichael uses style and organization in the same aggressive manner. Carmichael's use of language, which is the major factor in explaining his considerable impact on white sensibilities, is much less extreme when viewed as jazz performance. In jazz the musician regularly tests the norms of musical convention. He employs large skips, extreme ranges and registers, and shocking timbre as he improvises his melodic lines. He makes his instrument squeak, honk, and moan. His facility is a mark of excellence in technique and individuality. The extreme becomes the norm when compared to "legitimate" music.

That many of the sounds of jazz have figurative or literal sexual symbolism is accepted; the jazz musician is willing to portray human experience considered taboo by "squares," and that willingness is one reason for the gap between the initiated and the masses in appreciating jazz.

Similarly, Mr. Carmichael uses his material aggressively, exceeding the norms of verbal convention. All white American are "honkies." The liberal who employs a Negro maid and the youth who participated in the Mississippi Project stand condemned for their lack of sensitivity. Negro integrationists are called "Whitey Young" and "Uncle Tom Wilkins."

Carmichael makes rhetorical use of four-letter words and sexual allusions. Illustrating how the press had distorted news of the Alabama Freedom Party by calling it the Black Panther Party because of its ballot symbol, he suggested that the white rooster of the regular party be subjected to the same treatment. "Our question is, why don't they call the Alabama Democratic Party the White Cock Party?"[13]

Jazz *is* improvisation as Stokely Carmichael's rhetoric is extemporaneous, adaptive, and innovative. In jazz this element elevates the performer to the supreme position, superior to the tunesmith who first composed the basic material. While the basic sequence of chords and relative duration values are retained by the performer, he produces a melodic line that is his own creation.

Likewise, Stokely Carmichael is an improvisor. His style, concepts, and combinations represent unique and interesting arrangement and his improvisation on syllogistic reasoning illustrates his improvisation. In the Berkeley speech he said:

> So people have been telling you anything all black is bad. Let's make that our major premise. Major premise: Anything all black is bad. Minor premise or particular premise: I am all black. Therefore . . . (delayed applause and laughter) I'm never going to be put in that bag.[14]

Conventional material was here employed in a pattern of improvisation. The chordal structure of the jazz tune could be likened to the structure of the syllogism which was familiar material to the college-age audience as the tune is familiar to the jazz fan.

Further illustration is found in the way that Carmichael adapted his syllogism to the all black audience in Detroit:

> There's a thing called a syllogism. And it says like, if you're born in Detroit, you're beautiful; that's the major premise. The minor premise is — I am born in Detroit. Therefore, I'm beautiful.

[11]"King's Last Tape," *Newsweek*, December 16, 1968.

[12]Kenneth B. Clark, "The Present Dilemma of the Negro," *Journal of Negro History*, LIII (1968), 8.

[13]Lomas, p. 140

[14]Lomas, p. 140

> anything all black is bad – major premise. Minor premise – I'm all black. Therefore (pause) yeah, yeah, (laughter and applause) yeah. You're all out there, and the man telling you about yourself, and you don't know it.[15]

Seldom does a jazz man play a tune the very same way twice, although it is often the same. That Stokely Carmichael is an improvisor is apparent, both in terms of invention and subsequent idea adaptation.

Jazz musicians frequently omit notes from phrases; Carmichael omits expected content elements. Charlie Parker recorded many solos where melodic lines had omitted notes; that is, in the course of an improvised line he would establish a harmonic direction and then omit sounds. The tendency of the line would lead the listener to mentally fill in the missing sounds, whether they occurred during or at the ends of phrases. The effect is widely used and succeeds in mentally involving listeners as participants instead of passive observers.

Stokely Carmichael also uses omission in three ways: words, lines of argument, and answers to questions are omitted. In the Berkeley speech, Carmichael says:

> We must now set a criteria, and if there's going to be any integration it's going to be a two-way thing.

Or

> We must question the values of this society, and I maintain that black people are the best people to do that, because we have been excluded from that society, and the question is, we ought to think whether or not we want to become a part of that society.[16]

White Americans might have difficulty with this syntax, but the initiate knows what is implied: he fills in the details from his own experience, as in the classic enthymeme. The "syllogism ploy" discussed earlier is another example of omission used successfully in the Berkeley speech and the Detroit speech.

Repetition is another device common to jazz musicians and Carmichael. While frequently observed in many art forms, its literal character is notable in this particular comparison. The jazz riff is melodic repetition, while the ride beat and bass pattern is repetitive rhythmic permeatation; both are basic to jazz structure. Endings are frequently repeated in jazz. Often repeated materials are compressed when when repeated.

Carmichael made considerable use of the latter form of jazz repetition; a literal or compressed replay of the last part of a sentence or of the final sentence of a paragraph. An example is found in the Berkeley speech:

> I don't want any of your blood money. I don't want it, don't want any part of that system. And the question is how do we raise those questions? How do we raise them . . . how do we begin to raise them?[17]

The rhythmic prose found throughout Carmichael's oratory is notable and, like all artistic rhythm, is based on the repetition of patterns. While the comparison of jazz rhythm with anything else is difficult, a sense of rhythmic comparability can be felt between Carmichael's oratory and jazz. Through both literal and compressed repetition, Carmichael makes maximum use of rhythm. Its effect is the same as in jazz, and Carmichael swings.

Finally, the jazz man and Stokely Carmichael share a capacity to elicit and exploit audience participation. While the modern jazz setting is much more subdued than in earlier days, a strong link between performer and audience remains, finding its expression in more subtle ways. Polite attention during performance, applause at ends of choruses, fraternization between numbers, and subtle rhythmic movement of audience members are acceptable behaviors in intimate jazz spots. However, at the large jazz festivals, audiences are more demonstrative – boistrous applause, cheering, and whistling are means by which they feed back approval of the music. In either setting, jazz men perform better when interaction is strong. They will always go "one more time" when the crowd is digging.

Stokely Carmichael elicits overt audience response in the form of applause, laughter, or audience comment and then reacts to their response which generates more response. There are instances where each sentence in a paragraph was followed by applause of increased intensity – the speaker and audience rising together in a crescendo that continued long beyond the final words of the idea sequence. The Detroit speech is typical:

> You send a black man to Vietnam to fight for rights, and he doesn't have any rights in his homeland, he's a black mercenary. You send a black man to Vietnam and he gets shot and killed fighting for his country; and you bring him home, and they won't bury him in his land – he's a black mercenary. (applause) He's a black mercenary (continued applause). And if we going to be black mercenaries they ought to pay us twenty five thousand dollars a year and let us come home every weekend (laughter and applause). Since they are not going to do that, we are going to have to develop in our communities enough internal strength to tell everyone in this country that we're not going to your damn war, period. (shouts and applause) We've got to do that (continued applause).[18]

The rhetoric of Stokely Carmichael has been perceived literally by too many white Americans. The backlash component of recent political events is an indication of the anxiety produced by this literal interpretation.

[15]Scott and Brockriede, *Rhetoric*, p. 88.

[16]Lomas, p. 146.

[17]Lomas, p. 146.

[18]Scott and Brockriede, *Rhetoric*, pp. 89 – 90

LeRoi Jones, black poet, playwright, and jazz critic comments:

> Form and content are both mutually expressive of the whole. And they are both equally expressive . . . each has an identifying motif and function. We want different content and different forms because we have different feelings. We are different peoples.[19]

White Americans might better adjust to the reality of black power if they view the message as a newer version of an old thought pattern growing out of the Negro's life experience. The pattern is manifested in the form of jazz and its message, style, and organization have been experienced and appreciated by many whites. Through the idiom, whites have gained insight and empathy about the world of the black man.

America must resolve the conflict between the races in a manner acceptable to Negroes and whites. A first step may well be a decision on the part of whites to perceive black rhetoric at a more sophisticated level than mere literality. A broader cultural appreciation offers direction for a mature and intelligent interpretation that scholars may find useful in fulfilling their obligation to interpret information for the broader community.

[19]LeRoi Jones, *Black Music* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1967), p. 185.